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UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION V

FEB 28 1986

DATE:

SUBJECT: Immediate Removal Request for the
A-Chemical Corporation - Chicago, Illinois

Stephen M. Browning
FROM: Stephen M. Browning, On-Scene Coordinator
Western Response Unit

TO: Valdas V. Adamkus
Regional Administrator

THRU: Basil G. Constantelos, Director
Waste Management Division

PURPOSE

The purpose of this memorandum is to obtain confirmation of your verbal authorization to expend up to \$17,000 to secure the site of a chemical fire and to clean up chromium contaminated water around the building.

BACKGROUND

The incident, a fire at A-Chemical Corporation, located at 1322 N. Western Avenue, in Chicago, Illinois, occurred during the afternoon on January 26, 1986. Verbal authorization was given to expend up to \$10,000 on January 26, 1986, and subsequently increased to \$15,000 on January 31, 1986.

A Chem-Corporation custom blended chemicals for the electroplating industry. These chemicals included acids, cyanides, and metal brighteners.

The facility is located on a major thoroughfare, and receives both heavy vehicular and pedestrian traffic. Further, it is in direct proximity to restaurants, residences and schools.

THREAT

There were several threats associated with this particular site. They include the real potential for the acids to react with the cyanides which results in the formation of hydrogen cyanide gas (HCN). HCN is an acutely toxic compound; exposure to 150 parts-per-million (PPM) for 30-60 minutes is threatening to human life. HCN can be absorbed dermally or via inhalation. HCN is highly explosive when exposed to heat, flames, or oxidizers such as acids.

The building was unsecured and easily accessible to passerbys and vandals. Moreover, chromium contaminated water surrounded the building. The primary thoroughfare, Western Avenue, as well as the adjacent side streets, Potomac and Artesian, and the alley behind the facility were contaminated. The potential for further off-site contamination of chromium contaminated water was very high.

These threats constituted an immediate and significant risk to human life and health by exposure to acutely toxic substances. They met the criteria for immediate removal as described in paragraph 300.65 of the National Contingency Plan.

ENFORCEMENT

Mr. Pauga, owner of the facility, and his attorney were notified of our intent to initiate an immediate removal, should they not proceed with a cleanup. He committed to securing the site and to a removal of all acids and cyanides currently stored in a storage area. He was unable to finance a cleanup of the contamination surrounding the building.

PROPOSED PROJECTS AND COSTS

Our action was essentially external. Contaminated firewater was removed from the front, sides, and rear of the facility and the contiguous streets of Potomac and Artesian. Heavy equipment, including a front end loader, was available from the City of Chicago. Removal costs include the following:

<u>REMOVAL COSTS</u>	<u>BUDGET</u>
Extramural cost	\$12,000
Intramural cost (TAT, EPA)	3,000
 SUBTOTAL	 \$15,000
Other Costs (15% of Subtotal)	2,000
TOTAL COST	<u>\$17,000</u>

REGIONAL RECOMMENDATION

Because the threats present at this site met the National Contingency Plan Section 300.65 criteria for an immediate removal, I recommend your approval of this ceiling increase request. The proposed actions will successfully abate the threat to the public health. My office will allocate \$12,000 in extramural funds for this action.

APPROVE: Alan Levin (Acting) DATE: 2/28/86
REGIONAL ADMINISTRATOR

DISAPPROVE: _____ DATE: _____
REGIONAL ADMINISTRATOR

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RECOMMENDATION

Because conditions at this site meet the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA) 104(c) criteria, I recommend that you approve an exemption from the 6-month limit. This post facto exemption is necessary for the U.S. EPA to comply with CERCLA 104(c) due to the present interpretation that this was a continuation of a previous removal action as opposed to the initially presumed interpretation that these were two separate and distinct removal actions.

APPROVE:

Robert Springer
REGIONAL ADMINISTRATOR

DATE:

2-17-87

DISAPPROVE:

REGIONAL ADMINISTRATOR

DATE:
